

Public Works Committee Fiscal Year 2014

Committee Members: Christine Gray-Mullen (Chair), Charles Moran, Richard Fein, William Mullin, Don Wise (new member)

Staff Liaison: Guilford Mooring, DPW Superintendent

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At the start of FY 14, the Public Works Committee (PWC) had a new chair, Christine Gray-Mullen and one new member, Don Wise. PWC met 8 times over the year in August, October, November, January, February, March, April, and June. In accordance with its charge, the committee reviewed DPW plans for street repairs, improvements and reconstruction. Sidewalks and traffic calming were also common subjects.

Pedestrian Safety at Main and Triangle Street: The PWC sent a motion to the Select Board recommending the Town install a conditional no-right-on-red signal, activated by the walk button, at the Triangle/Main intersection, so that traffic going west on Main and turning right on Triangle will have to stop on red when the walk light is lighted.

Stop Sign at Shays and Middle Street Intersection: The PWC sent a motion to the Select Board recommending that the Town install a stop sign for east-bound traffic at the intersection of the east-bearing spur of Shays Street and Middle Street.

Active Streets Bill: The PWC took up a motion to the Select Board requesting that Town officials “sign on” to a bill, S68, H3091, titled “Active Streets,” that is being proposed in the Massachusetts legislature.

Wildwood Elementary School area to be declared a “School Zone”: PWC sent a motion requesting the Select Board to declare the Wildwood Elementary School area (including Strong St and E. Pleasant St.) a “School Zone” and to require the installation of the appropriate markings, signs, and lights.

Speed Hump Signage: After last year’s installation of speed humps on Dana Street and Blue Hills Road, feedback from residents was that the traffic calming devices had improved the situation but some were not happy with the amount of signage that was required. The PWC sent a motion to the Select Board recommending that in the future, if new speed humps around the Town are approved, the residents requesting the speed humps on their roads are informed that if installed, there will be substantial signage that will have an effect on the appearance of the road.

Mill Street Bridge Reconstruction: After much discussion and two public meetings, the PWC sent a motion requesting the Select Board recommend that the Mill Street/Puffers Pond Bridge be constructed according to the design plans labeled “Alternative 4” with a one-way, one-lane vehicular travel lane, and a multi-use path. The committee did not determine the direction of vehicular travel (North or South flow), pending further study by a range of interested parties.

Ongoing Projects:

Pine Street: Previous motions made on this Pine Street redesign over the past two years occurred at the PWC meetings held on: September 2012, January 2013, & April 2013. Three recent public

meetings were held on this road design (February, April & June, 2014). At the last meeting, the PWC reviewed “Conceptual Street Layout 4’-5’ Sidewalk with Bike Lane,” dated 6/2/14 provided by the DPW. It is anticipated that the PWC will make a motion to the Select Board at its next meeting.

Triangle Street/East Pleasant Street Intersection: The PWC has discussed two conceptual plans for the reconstruction: one that is a roundabout, and one that adds turn lanes to the existing intersection. The Committee believes that, in concept, the roundabout is the better option for all modes of transportation: vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles. The roundabout design produces shorter crosswalks and less land-taking from Kendrick Park. When the PWC has a schematic design (30%) to review and discuss a motion will be made.

Summer 2014 Paving Season: Paving this summer will include a basecoat to Pine Street that will be finished with a topcoat in 2015. PWC is pleased that Amherst side streets will also be repaved in the Farview Neighborhood including Old Town Way, Moorland Street, Fairfield Street, Berkshire Terrace, Valley Lane, and Farview Way.

Transportation Plan Task Force: In 2011, the Town Manager created a Task Force to assist in developing a Town Transportation Plan that will expand on the Transportation Section of the Town Master Plan. The Plan will provide a comprehensive framework for addressing transportation needs of the Town in all modes. Christine Gray-Mullen and Charles Moran represent the PWC on this Task Force. Work is ongoing with currently an RFP seeking to hire a consultant to assist the Task Force with creating a Transportation Plan.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Gray-Mullen, Chair

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Fiscal Year 2014

Another year has come to an end and the Department is still working through the retirements of veteran employees. This year four employees with a combined 120+ years of experience retired.

Jeff Osborne the Water Division Director began work for the DPW in September of 1969. He witnessed the construction of all three of the existing water treatment facilities. The constant increase in industry regulations that has come about as a result of the Clean Water Act and other follow on regulations. All things that added to the complexity of his job and the improved water safety to the public

Jim Laford the Waste Water Treatment Division Director began work in October of 1978. He was on board during the startup of the current waste water treatment facility adjacent to UMass on Mullins Way. He too saw the direct results of the Clean Water Act as secondary and tertiary treatment became the standard that replaced the primary treatment facilities of the turn of the century (1900). He is leaving as a new wave of issues and treatment options are on the horizon.

The other two employees are Robert MacDonald a vehicle mechanic who started in June of 1983 and Darryl Hagar a water mechanic who started in December of 1991. Both employees were experts in the fields and provided valuable service to the Department.

In the era of smaller government and do more with less it is important to realize that it takes employees to repair, maintain, and operate many of the systems that we as residents, citizens, and visitors use every day without thinking. Working from home when you do not feel well, or the weather is bad is not an option for the employees of this Department. For the Department to function it takes dedicated employees like these to make the system work and to look seamless and effortless.

Respectfully submitted,

Guilford B. Mooring II, P.E.

Guilford B. Mooring II, P.E.
Superintendent of Public Works

Construction and Maintenance

The personnel of the Highway Division in addition to their normal maintenance, completed the following projects during FY 14.

1. Completed construction support to Mass DOT for the Wildwood Safe Routes to School Project and the Atkins Corner Intersection Improvements project.
2. Completed the construction of the Amherst Road sewer line project.
3. Piloted a new road resurfacing technique, asphalt re-heating for road resurfacing.
4. Crack Sealed 5 miles of Town streets.
5. Assisted in the reconstruction of the Amherst Regional Middle School tennis courts and several walkways.
6. Provided personnel to the water department to assist in the installation of the Hillcrest water main.
7. Supported the conversion of the Town owned streetlights, in areas outside the downtown, to LED to improve light quality and reduce electrical usage.
8. Completed phase two of the Landfill re-grading project with the help of the Solid Waste crews.
9. Installed traffic calming on Dana, Blue Hills, and Lincoln Ave.
10. Upgraded Middle School tennis courts working with the Regional School System and the Entrance to Amherst College's new football stadium, for Amherst College.

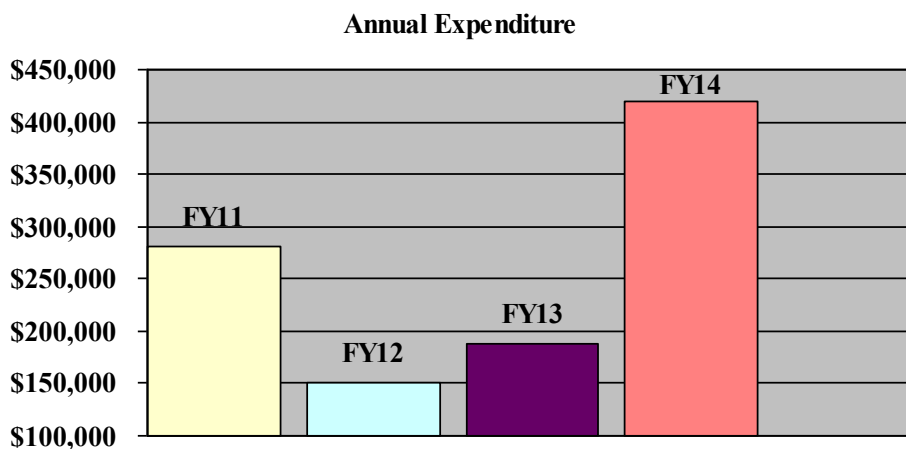
STREETS THAT WERE PAVED

Triangle Street
Strong Street
Lincoln Avenue

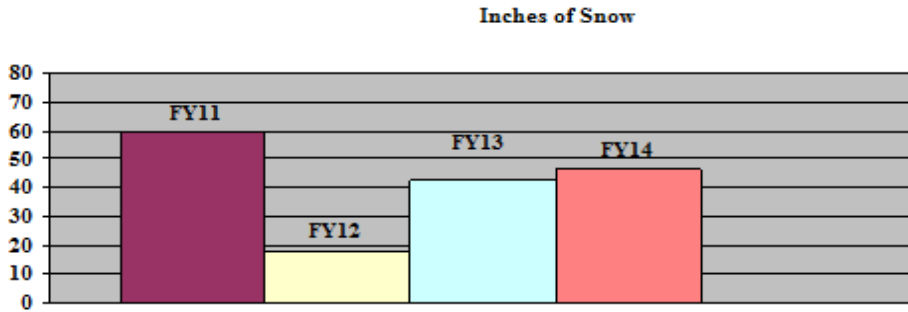
SEWER MAINTENANCE

Investigated 17 Sewer Backups

SNOW AND ICE REMOVAL



There were 32 snow and ice storms, with a total of 46.4 inches of snow. 0 tons of sand was used and 2,376 tons of salt was used. 4,000 gallons of Ice Band Magic were used on the roadways and sidewalks.



Year	Cost	Snow (inches)	No. of Storms
FY11	\$280,081	60	31
FY12	\$150,238	17.9	14
FY13	\$187,280	42.5	28
FY14	\$418,813	46.4	32

Highway Division Director

TREE AND GROUNDS DIVISION FY 14

The Tree & Grounds Division has eight full time employees and is divided into two main working groups; a 2 person Tree Crew and 5 person Grounds Crew, the Division Director who also acts as the Town's Tree Warden is responsible for enforcing M.G.L. Chapter 87 and the Scenic Roads Act.

The Tree Crew currently consists of a Tree Maintenance Worker and a Laborer whose primary task is to manage the Town's Public Shade Trees along Town roads, commons, parks, and cemeteries. The tree crew's duties include inspecting and assessing, pruning, removing, and planting of public shade trees, as well as the operating and maintenance of the Town's three cemeteries. The crew is also responsible for hanging the community events banners downtown which flies over the road next to the Main Common.

Burials in FY 14

West Cemetery 2
 North Cemetery 10
 South Cemetery 9

The Grounds Crew consists of a Forman, Parks Maintenance worker, Pool Maintenance Worker, Truck Driver and a Laborer. During the growing season May through August two seasonal employees are hired to assist with maintenance. The Grounds Crew is responsible for maintaining the Town's 6 athletic fields areas, 8 school athletic field areas, 5 parks, 3 commons, 2 swimming pools, 3 wading pools, 3 comfort stations, parking garage, and over 15 other smaller public spaces around town. Grounds Crew is also responsible for mowing at numerous road side intersections around town and the

daily removal of trash receptacles from the downtown business district including all the trash receptacles at parks commons and public spaces.

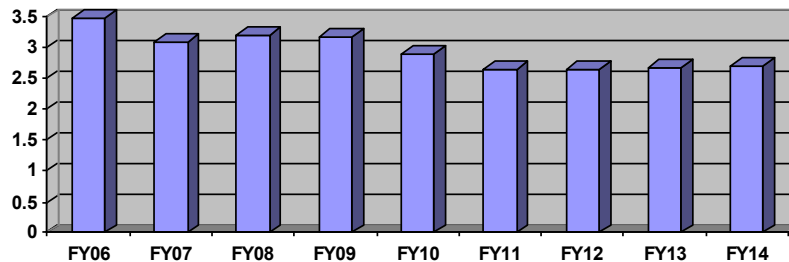
During the winter months the Tree & Grounds Division is responsible for snow removal at the parking garage and numerous side walks around town. Staff also assist the Highway Division with regular plow routes.

WATER TREATMENT & DISTRIBUTION

Water Consumption: The average daily water consumption for FY 14 was 2.698 million gallons; the peak day, August 23, 2013 was 3.845 million gallons. The total FY 14 rainfall was 43.37 inches well over the annual average of 42 inches.

The following figures summarize the amount of water pumped, the revenue generated and the chemicals used to treat the water. Chlorine, ozone and ammonia are used for disinfection. Potassium permanganate is used for iron and manganese removal at Well #4. Polymer is used for water treatment at the Atkins and Centennial water treatment plants. Fluoride is added at a level of 1 part per million to reduce tooth decay and sodium hydroxide is used to elevate the pH of the water for corrosion control.

Daily Water Consumption in Million Gallons



Water Services

	FY12	FY13	FY14
NEW SERVICES INSTALLED	7	15	7
TOTAL WATER SERVICES	6263	6278	6285
#METERS REPLACED	850	433	457
HYDRANTS REPLACED/REPAIRED	15/27	5/15	11/30
WATER MAIN BREAKS	6	6	1

Chemical Usage-All Sites

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
CHLORINE (LBS.)			
SODIUM HYDROXIDE (GALS)	11,321	11,904	11,138
POLYMER (GALS)	3,195	2,730	3,057
POTASSIUM PERMANGANATE(LBS)	538	340	430
AMMONIA (LBS)	4,073	3,826	4,444
SODIUM FLUORIDE (LBS.)	15,170	16,030	13,740
OZONE	0	0	0

Monthly Finished Water Pumping in Million Gallons

Month	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
July	95.243	91.777	83.643
August	82.693	81.891	84.427
September	92.701	96.210	102.411
October	89.978	90.745	99.295
November	79.931	77.593	83.064
December	73.262	68.115	69.821
January	69.512	68.402	72.086
February	78.187	75.964	77.871
March	77.260	76.844	79.336
April	87.535	86.308	84.149
May	77.871	80.424	77.156
June	71.564	68.946	74.159
Total	975.737	963.219	987.418
Daily Average	2.666	2.639	2.698
Maximum Daily	4.147 (7/23/2011)	4.185 (7/19/2012)	3.845 (8/23/2013)
Minimum Daily	0.901 (10/31/2011)	1.502 (12/26/2012)	1.399 (12/27/2013)

Water Pumped By Source - Million Gallons

Source	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
Wells #1 & #2	100	202	135
Well #3	219	217	220
Well #4	75	70	108
Well #5	1	1	1
Pelham Reservoirs	209	186	189
Atkins Reservoir	369	284	333
Total Water Pumped	975	960	987
Average Daily (millions)	2.666	2.639	2.698

* Quantity adjusted for meter error 200 gpm

Water Billed – Cubic Feet	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
UMass	37,174,900	37,413,400	35,242,900
Amherst College	4,510,900	4,158,100	5,503,300
Hampshire College	2,096,200	2,040,000	2,021,800
Town	75,145,000	67,721,200	64,288,200
Municipal	834,200	1,056,900	961,200
Special Water Readings	179,300	197,100	232,700
Other –Reuse, Misc	2,802,000	3,031,500	5,626,900
Un-metered Use	---	---	---
Adjustments (minus)	(231,900)	(627,600)	(807,200)
Total Metered (ft³)	122,510,600	144,990,600	113,069,800
Total Metered (million gals.)	---	---	---
% Unaccounted	---	---	---

*Adjusted for meter error

Total Revenue Rounded– Dollars		FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
UMass	Water	\$1,195,068	\$1,277,008	\$1,293,073
	Sewer	\$1,245,339	\$1,290,904	\$1,345,170
Amherst College	Water	\$152,087	\$144,380	\$189,949
	Sewer	\$151,557	\$143,555	\$195,442
Hampshire College	Water	\$70,115	\$70,381	\$69,705
	Sewer	\$70,183	\$70,421	\$71,785
Town	Water	\$2,228,863	\$2,344,510	\$2,224,580
	Sewer	\$2,010,273	\$2,106,966	\$2,092,417
Municipal	Water	\$31,751	\$40,025	\$36,766
	Sewer	\$27,849	\$36,132	\$33,984
Special Reading	Water & Sewer	\$12,310	\$14,531	\$15,476
Abatements	Water & Sewer	\$18,384	(\$46,896)	(\$49,464)
Other	Water & Sewer	\$184,489	\$207,692	\$209,448
Total Revenue		\$7,398,268	\$7,669,607	\$7,728,330

WATER QUALITY DATA

Bacterial Samples: Bimonthly samples were analyzed from 21 DEP approved sites around town. All sampled were negative for total coliform, fecal or e.coli bacteria.

Fluoride: Fluoride was added to all sources at a level of 0.8 ppm to prevent tooth decay.

Treatment Plant Performance: Both the Atkins and Centennial (Pelham) Water Treatment plants produced water that meet the requirements set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The average turbidity from Atkins was 0.11 N.T.U. and from Centennial 0.09 N.T.U. The EPA requires that these readings be less than 0.3 N.T.U. in 95% of the samples. Total Trihalomethanes, a byproduct of chlorine disinfection, averaged 47.6 ppb from quarterly sampling at eight different sights around town. The EPA limit is 80 ppb. Haloacetic acids, another by product of chlorine disinfection, were also analyzed quarterly at 8 different locations and the average value was 33.7 ppm, well below the EPA limit of 60 ppm.

Water Rate: The water rate for FY 14 was \$3.30 hundred cubic feet (HCF)

Cross Connection Program: The cross connection program was established in 1989 under Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulation 310 CMR 22.22 to prevent cross contamination of the water supply with hazardous substances. Water department staff tests these devices twice annually.

Total Backflow Devices

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
Town	65	67	68
UMass	527	618	625
Amherst College	107	116	119
Hampshire College	32	0	0
Commercial	193	202	205
Residential-Irrigation	51	51	51
Total	943	1054	1068

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

The Wastewater Treatment Plant is an advanced secondary treatment process utilizing biological nutrient removal that continues to produce clean effluent pumped to the Connecticut River. The twenty pumping stations, which bring wastewater to the plant, are well-maintained. Construction of the plant was completed in 1978, and nearly all major equipment has been upgraded for energy savings. The FY 14 sewer rate is \$3.55 per hundred cubic feet (750 gallons) used. The average household cost in Amherst is approximately \$426 per year.

Flow Data

The Wastewater Treatment Plant treated 1.41 billion gallons of wastewater in FY 14. The average daily flow was 3.85 million gallons. The highest flow to the plant in one day was 8.54 million gallons on May 1, 2014. The lowest flow was 2.64 million gallons on August 6, 2013. Chlorine is used to disinfect the clean effluent prior to discharge into the Connecticut River and occasionally for controlling undesirable organisms in our treatment process. Polymer is used to thicken sludge prior to disposal. Potassium permanganate is used for control of odors associated with sludge processing

Rainfall and Flow Data

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
<u>Inches of Rainfall</u>	52.00	47.61	43.28
Average Daily Flow in Million Gallons	4.55	4.11	3.85
Highest Day, Total in Million Gallons	10.48 (12/08/2011)	8.44 (6/14/2014)	8.54 (5/1/2014)
Chemicals Used			
Chlorine (lbs.)	9,775	10,275	8,935
Polymer (lbs.)	3,448	3,068	3,223
Potassium Permanganate (lbs.)	2,750	2,915	2,805

Chlorine is used to disinfect the clean effluent prior to discharge into the Connecticut River and occasionally for controlling undesirable organisms in our treatment process. Polymer is used to thicken sludge prior to disposal. Potassium Permanganate is used for odor control associated with sludge processing.

Treatment Efficiency

Wastewater is tested in our laboratory. A few specialized tests are performed by contract laboratories. Testing performed on wastewater is tested as it enters the facility, after primary treatment, and prior to the cleaned effluent to exiting the facility. In addition, many process control tests are performed to optimize treatment and produce the best quality effluent possible. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) monitor our activities and measure our effectiveness by the parameters listed below (annual averages).

Parameter	EPA Limit	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
Biochemical Oxygen Demand (mg/L)	25	3.0	4.0	2.0
Total Suspended Solids (mg/L)	30	3.0	4.0	3.0
Chlorine Residual (mg/L)	1.0	.58	0.31	0.47

Septage Received

The treatment plant receives septage from residential septic tanks pumped from the towns of Amherst, Pelham and Shutesbury. Below is a summary of the number of septic tanks (usually 1000 gallons each) that were pumped.

Town	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
Amherst	134	104	96
Pelham	57	57	60
Shutesbury	117	102	98
Total	308	263	254

Wastewater Reuse

The University of Massachusetts presently takes approximately 120-180 gallons per minute of our clean effluent, performs advanced treatment, then uses it as boiler make-up water at their Central Heating Plant to reduce their demand for Amherst water.

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
Million Gallons	Est. 70	46.1	39.1

Sludge Data

Sludge is the residual organic material left after the wastewater is treated. We currently thicken these solids on-site, and Casella Waste Management is under contract to deliver the liquid sludge to an EPA-approved sludge incinerator. Sludge in FY 11 was transported to three incineration facilities: Fitchburg, MA; Millbury, MA; and Naugatuck, CT.

Sludge Data	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
Total Gallons (transported)	4,086,000	*4,974,300	4,216,300
Total Dry Tons	1,106	1,034	1,035
% Solids	6.5	*5.0	5.9

Primary disposal site. The secondary sites could not handle as high percent solids resulting in more loads being transported.

Month	Total Gallons	Ave. % Solids	Total Dry Tons	Dry Tons Per Day
July	274,500	5.9	67.26	2.17
August	213,500	6.4	56.35	1.82
September	373,000	5.9	91.29	3.04
October	481,000	5.8	115.25	3.72
November	408,200	5.8	99.62	3.32
December	358,600	5.8	85.76	2.76
January	274,900	5.8	66.32	2.14
February	396,700	5.8	96.48	3.45
March	369,500	6.0	92.93	3.0
April	431,500	6.1	109.43	3.65
May	374,200	5.7	90.07	2.91
June	260,700	5.9	63.94	2.13
Total	4,216,300	--	1034.71	--
Average	351,358	5.9	86.2	2.84

Power consumption

	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14
<u>Avg. kWh/month</u>	94,954	108,274	120,736
Avg. kW Demand	207	242	323
KWH/Million Gallons	684	870	1,031

* New Nitrogen requirement requires more electrical usage.

Nitrogen Removal

Parameters	Limit	FY 13	FY 14
Total Nitrogen	546.5 lbs/day	*NA	497.9 lbs/day

The Town of Amherst was issued a new permit as of September 1, 2012. This new permit requires our facility to maintain the limit of 546.5 pounds per day total nitrogen. This new requirement resulted in the plant being re-graded to a grade VII facility. Our goal is to attain permit levels year round, with existing structure, instrumentation, lab work and process control. We have researched bioaugmentation and chemical addition; however we are making every effort to make the process work without added cost. *Data will be accumulated going forward.

Special Activities

1. A new motor was installed for pump #1 and the pump was rebuilt at the Stanley Street Pumping Station. The pump was also rebuilt.
2. Stanley Street Pumping Station pump #2 mechanical seal and bearings were replaced by our staff.
3. A new Aeration Outfall Return submersible pump and associated piping was purchased and installed. The design and installation was carried out by our staff to enhance Biological Nutrient Removal.
4. More dissolved oxygen probes were added to the Aeration Basins to improve aerator speed automation and improve energy efficiency.
5. Purchased and installed new pumps, motors and valves at Blackberry Lane pump station.
6. Installed larger horse power pump at Main Street pump station.

Division Director/Waste

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

Although the Town's Expanded Polystyrene Ban became effective in January, for the most part solid waste and recycling services were in a holding pattern as uncertainty about the Transfer Station and the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund's future grew. In May 2014 the Transfer Station's computer crashed, its data deemed unsalvageable. The Station will operate using paper records until a new computer is purchased.

Grants

Please note: At some point in the past, annual grant information started getting reported one year earlier, likely due to the confusion between calendar and fiscal years. This year we are repeating the grant information from last year's report because it was actually applied for and granted in fiscal year 2014.

The Springfield Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) Advisory Board awarded the Town \$2,600 to purchase 20 public event recycling collection units and a wheeled storage cart, ten 96 gallon wheeled toters (for container recycling storage), "Property of DPW" stickers, and bags for use in the collection units. The stickers were affixed to the event collection units and recycling bins at Amherst Regional Middle School to help prevent attrition.

Outreach and Public Education

Community Compost Presentation – In February 2014, a public presentation by Athena Lee Bradley of the Northeast Recycling Council about community composting options was organized and well-attended.

School Composting Program – TTT Trucking continues to collect food scraps, paper waste and milk cartons weekly from Fort River and Wildwood elementary school. It is delivered to Martin's Farm in Greenfield, MA for processing. Crocker Farm Elementary School operates an on-site composting program (paper napkins, fruits and vegetables only) which struggles due to lack of administrative ownership. At the beginning of each school year Recycling Committee and parent volunteers assist with waste sorting and compost education in elementary school cafeterias. This year, a bright and passionate Mount Holyoke College graduate committed to work with Crocker Farm on their on-site compost program, but within a few months she was hired by a Boston-based company and moved from the area.

The school district's food service contractor (Whitson's Culinary Group) continues to utilize compostable (sugar cane fiber) trays when washable trays are not used. We are grateful as expanded polystyrene foam trays can be purchased at a fraction of the cost. Schools with compost pick-up arrangements are able to add the trays to their compost dumpster, greatly reducing their trash volume (especially if emptied trays are stacked).

Earth Day Newspaper Insert – 2014 is the 7th year of the Insert's Earth Week distribution in local papers (Hampshire Gazette, the Amherst Bulletin, and the Franklin County Recorder). The insert contains information regional hazardous waste collection events, community recycling contacts, donation and commercial reuse opportunities and an extensive household disposal reference guide. This year's theme was zero waste.

Amherst Sustainability Festival – The Recycling and Refuse Management Committee added a collection of large expanded polystyrene (aka Styrofoam) blocks and wood fuel pellet bags to their textile collection at the Festival. The amount of collected textiles fell again, to 571 pounds. We believe this is due to more people understanding that Salvation Army will accept clean and dry worn, torn and stained items year-round for recycling.

Taste of Amherst – Year three of the Taste of Amherst's compostable disposable serveware requirement was very successful. Three waste disposal sort stations were manned by community volunteers, with a fourth unmanned station in the beer tent. Amend Organics again collected the compostable material which was stored and moved in wheeled 64 gallon toters. While administration of the compostable requirement gets easier each year, new challenges also arise. This year, several restaurants purchased materials in good faith that had been marketed as "green," "sustainable" or "degradable," but were not in fact *biodegradable*. Despite challenges, the Taste organizing committee continues to be pleased with the endeavor.

Additional Initiatives

Foam Free Initiative – In fall of 2013, the Recycling and Refuse Management Committee sent a letter to Amherst's food service community reminding them of the Expanded Polystyrene ban, which became effective on 1/1/14. It was a very smooth implementation. The ban will be enforced by the Health Department during their twice annual health inspections. To date, no establishments have taken advantage of the financial hardship postponement opportunity.

Amherst Toy Library – Two Amherst residents opened a toy lending library in October 2013. Based on similar endeavors in other communities, Amherst's Toy Library was housed in the Bangs Center after a search for a more accessible location was unsuccessful. Staffed the volunteers, the Library allowed residents to borrow durable toys such as puzzles, doll houses/play structures and games for children 2-8 years of age. Unfortunately, consistent poor participation led to Library's closure in June 2014. Failure was likely due to some combination of difficulty reaching the right audience, poor location, ready availability of cheap toys and low number of interested Amherst residents.

Community Composting – A memorandum of understanding was signed in September 2013 allowing Amend Organics to continue to run the pay-as-you-throw compost program at the Transfer Station. Under the agreement, the Transfer Station will sell the compostable bags and Amend will pay the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund ten cents of the purchase price of each bag sold (\$1.43). The memorandum expires September 30, 2014. This year Amend ran a pumpkin collection program in early November in an attempt to divert Halloween Jack-o-Lanterns from household trash cans.

Downtown Recycling Initiative – The Recycling and Refuse Management Committee established a working group to make another attempt to establish container recycling in downtown Amherst. The Committee feels it is important to demonstrate the Town’s commitment to recycling and model appropriate behavior in support of the Town’s mandatory recycling regulation. Committee members and I met with Alan Snow, the Town’s Parks and Grounds Supervisor and the Director of Amherst’s Business Improvement to sketch out solutions and options.

Waste Collection and Landfill Diversion

Curbside pickup of trash and recyclables in Amherst continues to be provided by private trash haulers, however, households requesting variances are allowed to bring their recycling and trash directly to the Transfer Station in pre-paid bags.

Earth Machine composting units, kitchen counter compost pails, recycling bins, and safe needle collection containers continue to be available for purchase at the Transfer Station. Rain barrels from Jack’s Rain Barrels (New Hero, Vermont) were offered to Amherst residents at the bulk rate of \$65, and passive solar rotating composters were offered for \$80. Both barrels have a low carbon footprint as they are fashioned out of reclaimed food-grade 65 gallon barrels.

In FY 14 medical waste hauler Stericycle, processed 154 pounds of Sharps collected by Amherst’s Health Department and the Transfer Station.

The Recycling Center and Transfer Station continues to support other landfill diversion programs. The foam packing pellet and paper egg carton reuse program continues and the following items are accepted at no charge from residents with current vehicle stickers:

Clothing (goes to Salvation Army)	Christmas trees
Automotive & rechargeable batteries	Printer cartridges & cell phones
Waste automotive oil	Mixed containers
Leaves & grass clippings	Mixed paper
Mercury-bearing items such as thermometers & thermostats	

The option to donate return deposit drink containers to the local food bank continues with a designated bin. Fluorescent bulbs, brush, electronics, household solid waste (bulky items), construction/ demolition waste, scrap metal, asphalt, bricks, concrete, wood, paint, tires, appliances and propane tanks are all accepted for recycling/disposal after payment of associated fees.

The Take It or Leave It and Book Sheds, which allow Vehicle Sticker owners to swap books and household items, remain popular. Parking challenges continue.

A household hazardous waste (HHW) collection event was held on Saturday, September 28, 2013 (w/ contractor Clean Ventures, Inc.). Approximately 107 Amherst households participated. An additional 57 households from Hadley, Pelham, and Shutesbury participated via a resource/cost-sharing agreement. To avoid traffic issues at the Transfer Station the event was held this year in the parking lot of Fort River Elementary School.

Conclusion

Despite local uncertainty, regional waste reduction progress continued in fiscal year 2014. A group of concerned Pioneer Valley Residents created a regional citizen advocacy group called Valley Zero Waste. Their goal is to stimulate zero waste efforts at the grassroots level as a compliment to regulatory changes. Valley Zero Waste, in conjunction with members of the Town’s Recycling and

Refuse Management Department, are pursuing a local composting opportunity at the Amherst Cinema, and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is gearing up for a Food Waste Ban for organizations producing at least one ton of food waste per week. Although the ban will likely affect only a small number of Amherst organizations, it is an important beginning, as food waste is plentiful, heavy, and can be turned into a valuable soil additive. Removing food scraps and food-contaminated compostable paper waste from the waste stream is a big step in the right direction for community waste reduction.

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